A Romance of Love and Labor.

The Breadwinners, by ?

Who Wrote It? Can You Tell?

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CHAPTER I.

Ghostly Counsel.

CAPT. ARTHUR FARNHAM, millionaire and ex-soldier, stood beside a small gate let into the rear wall of the spacious grounds which lay at the rear of his house. Beside him, her great brown eyes eagerly taking in every detail of the luxury to which they were so little accustomed, was a tall and beautiful girl. A certain garish element in her dress and manner proclaimed more loudly than any words that she came from a far different social stratum than her erect, well-groomed host.

"If you are going home," Farnham was saying as they neared the little door in the wall, "the nearest way will be by the garden gate into Bishop's lane. It is only a minute's walk from there to your father's house in Dean street. Here is the gate."

Farnham opened it, and continued, "If you like, you can come in by this way whenever you have occasion to consult me about that library position. The gate is never locked in the daytime. It will save you a long walk."

"Thanks," she replied. "That will be perfectly lovely."

Her resources of expression were not copious, but her eyes and her mouth spoke volumes of joy and gratitude. Her hands were full of roses, and as she raised her beautiful face to him with pleasure flashing from her warm cheeks and lips and eyes she seemed to exhale something of the vigorous life and impulse of the spring sunshine. Farnham felt that he had nothing to do but stoop and kiss the blooming flower-like face, and in her exalted condition she would have thought little more of it than a blush-rose thinks of the same treatment. But he refrained, and said "Good morning," because she seemed in no mood to say it first.

"Good-by for a day or two," she said, gayly, as she bent her head to pass under the low lintel of the gate.

Farnham walked back to the house, not at all satisfied with himself. "I wonder whether I have mended matters? She is certainly too pretty a girl to be running in and out of my front door in the sight of all the avenue. How much better it will be for her to use the private entrance, and come and go by a sort of stealth! But, then, she does not regard it that way. She is so ignorant of this wicked world that it seems to her merely a saving of ten minutes' walk around the block. Well! all there is of it, I must find a place for her before she domesticates herself here. What position is she fit for? She has not breeding or education enough for a governess; she is not clever enough to write or paint; she is not steady enough to keep accounts. I have a grievous contract on my hands."

Miss Matilda Matchin (or "Maude," as she had renamed herself) was the daughter of Saul Matchin, one of the most respected carpenters in the lake city of Buffland. Saul had hoped his child might accept service as a housemaid; but she had received a smattering of education, had steeped her weak imagination in a course of dime-novel literature until she considered herself fitted for a far higher sphere. At length she had learned that a position in the Buffland Public Library was soon to become vacant. Capt. Farnham was President of the Library Board, and she had applied to him for the place. He was exerting what influence he could in favor of this beautiful, half-educated girl, who had intruded herself on him unintroduced, and whose gaucherie amused him. Several times she had thus called on him in reference to the library position, and each time her action had filled her with longing admiration for Farnham's surroundings and with contempt for Sam Sleeny, her father's big, blond assistant, who adored her.

Scarcely had Miss Matchin closed the gate of the Farnham paradise behind her when it was reopened and a tall, fine-looking man in carpenter's dress emerged and followed her into the lane.

"Sam—Sam Sleeny!" she exclaimed, turning and recognizing him.

"I was doing some work in the Farnham greenhouses," began the newcomer, somewhat abashed, "and I"——

"And you spied on me!"

"Mattie!"

She did not turn her face, but answered:

"If it ain't too much trouble, I'd like to have you call me Miss when we're alone. You'll be forgetting yourself and calling me Mattie before other people before you know it."

"Hold on," he burst out. "Don't talk to me that way—I can't stand it."

She glanced at him in surprise. His face was pale and disordered; he was twisting his fingers as if he would break them.

"Your temper seems to be on the move, Mr. Sleeny. Better go home," she said quietly.

"Don't go till I tell you something," he stammered hastily.

Her curiosity awoke. Sleeny stood twisting his fingers, growing pale and red by turns. At last, in a tremulous voice he said:

"I was there."

She stared at him an instant and said: "Where?"

"Oh, I was there, and I seen you. I was in the shrubbery there by the gate when you come out of the house. I was watchin' for you. I was on the lawn talkin' with the gardener when you went into the house. About an hour afterward I seen you comin' down the garden with him.

"I stopped workin' and kep' still behind them pear trees and I heard everything."

He uttered each word slowly, like a judge delivering sentence.

"Well, you heard 'Thank you, sir,' and 'Good morning.' It wasn't much, unless you took it as a lesson in manners, and goodness knows you need it."

"Now, look'ye here. It's no use foolin' with me. You know what I heard. If you don't, I'll tell you!"

"Very well, Mr. Paul Pry, what was it?" said the angry girl, who had quite forgotten that any words were spoken at the gate.

"I heard him tell you you could come in any time the back way," Sam hoarsely whispered, watching her face with eyes of fire. She turned crimson with anger. She was aware of having done nothing wrong, nothing to be ashamed of. She had been cherishing the recollection of her visit to Farnham as something too pleasant and delicate to talk about. No evil thought had mingled with it in her own mind. She had hardly looked beyond the mere pleasure of the day. She had not given a name or a form to the hopes and fancies that were fluttering at her heart. And now to have this sweet and secret pleasure handled and mauled by such a one as Sam Sleeny filled her with a speechless shame. Even yet she hardly comprehended the full extent of his insinuation. He did not leave her long in doubt. Taking her silence and her confusion as an acknowledgment, he went on in the same low, savage tone:

"I had my hammer in my hand. I looked through the pear trees to see if he kissed you. If he had a done it, I would have killed him as sure as death."

At this brutal speech she turned pale a moment, as if suddenly struck a stunning blow. Then she cried out:

"Hold your vile tongue, you"——

But she felt her voice faltering and the tears of rage gushing from her eyes. She buried her face in her hands and sat a little while in silence, while Sam was dumb beside her, feeling like an awkward murderer. She was not so overcome that she did not think very rapidly during this moment's pause. If she could have slain the poor fellow on the spot she would not have scrupled to do so, but she required only an instant to reflect that she had better appease him for the present and reserve her vengeance for a more convenient season.

She dried her eyes and turned them on him with an air of gentle, almost forgiving reproach.

"Sam! I could not have believed you had such a bad, wicked heart. I thought you knew me better. I won't make myself so cheap as to explain all that to you. But I'll ask you to do one thing for me. When we go home this evening, if you see my father alone, you tell him what you saw—and if you've got any shame in you you'll be ashamed of yourself."

Sam did as she commanded. He spoke guardedly to Saul Matchin, and was calmly informed the true state of affairs. But even then the lover's jealous brain refused to believe that any one could see Mattie (he could never remember to call her "Maud") and not adore her.

"'Tain't in natur," he growled. "She's the prettiest woman in the world. If Capt. Farnham has got eyes he knows it. But I spoke first, and he shan't have her, if I die for it."

Sleeny walked moodily down the street, engaged in that self-torture which is the chief recreation of unhappy lovers.

He felt a hand on his shoulder, and, turning, saw a face grinning a friendly recognition. It was a face whose whole expression was oleaginous. It was surmounted by a low and shining forehead covered by reeking black hair, worn rather long, the ends being turned under by the brush. The mustache was long and drooping, dyed black, and profusely oiled. The eyes were light green, with the space which should have been white suffused with yellow and red. It was one of those gifted countenances which could change in a moment from a dogilke fawning to a snaky venomousness.

The man was Andrew Jackson Offitt, or "Andy" Offitt, as he was more familiarly known. He lived by his wits, using his remarkable "gift of gab" to play the demagogue. He had gathered about him a gang of shirking, lazy and vicious men, the riff-raff of the Buffland laboring class; had 'organized them into the "Brotherhood of Breadwinners," and supported himself off the dues he wrung from them. Offitt secretly cherished a wild infatuation for Maud Matchin and always encouraged Sam to talk of her. To-day he quickly learned the story of Sam's jealousy and as quickly played on it to induce Sam to join "The Breadwinners."

Next morning Sam was half ashamed of having talked so much and for having allowed himself to be drawn into a brotherhood wherein he himself seemed to be the only decent, hardworking man of the whole membership.

Meantime Miss Matchin's mind had not been idle. The memory of the grandeur she had witnessed at Farnham's was ever before her. She was beautiful. Many men had admired her. Why not Capt. Farnham? Stranger love stories were recorded in the pages of her favorite novels.

Among her admirers was a Spiritualist named Bott, whose seances she had sometimes attended. She resolved to consult the spirits in this new quandary. She accordingly went to that night's seance and put her question. Bott, never doubting that it was himself who had inspired her love, fell into a mock trance, and the "spirit," speaking through his lips, gave her the following counsel:

"Dear brothers and sisters of the earth-life! On pearly wings of gossamer-down we float down from our shining spears to bring you messages of the higher life. The burden of your soul is open to the sperrut-eye. There sits in this room a pure and lovely soul in quest of light. Its query is, How does heart meet heart in mutual knowledge?"

Maud's cheek grew pale and then red, and her heart beat violently. But no one noticed her, and the seer went on. "If a true heart longs for another, there is no rest but in knowledge, there is no knowledge but in trewth, there is no trewth but in trust. Oh, my brother, if you love a female, tell your love. Oh, my sister, if you love—hum—if you love—hum—an individual of the opposite sex—oh, tell your love! Down with the shams of a false-hearted society; down with the chains of silence that crush your soul to the dust. If the object of your heart's throb is noble he will respond. Love claims love. Love has a right to love. If he is base, go to a worthier one. But from your brave and fiery heart a light will kindle his, and dual flames will wrap two chosen natures in high-menial melodies, when once the revelating word is spoken."

With these words he subsided into a deep trance, which lasted till the faithful grew tired of waiting, and shuffled slowly out of the door.

"I'll do it!" panted Maud, under her breath, as she made her way from the place. "I'll do as the spirits direct. I'll tell Arthur Farnham I love him."

(To Be Continued.)

Mrs. Nagg and Her Friends.

By Roy L. McCardell.

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"MR. NAGG, I do not want to hear you say one word against the Kind Words Club.

"Well, why don't you go? What are you standing around for? Here come the ladies of the Kind Words Club, and there is the baby crying!

"I knew you would wake the child, and it is nurse's afternoon out, too!

"How are you Mrs. Gradley, Mrs. Terwiliger, Mrs. Blenkinsop, Mrs. Dusenberry, Miss Minxton, Miss Smerk. I am so delighted to see you.

"Mr. Nagg has woke up the baby and now he is going to run off and leave me to take care of it!

"Bring it down? Well, wait a minute.

"Here is the tootsie tumty, umpty!"

MRS. TERWILIGER—Mrs. Nagg, I never like to interfere in other people's affairs, but I tell you that you should keep a flannel band around the child's stomach this weather. I don't want to say anything to alarm you, but that poor child has the same look in its eyes as my sister's baby last summer. It had no flannel band on and what was the consequence, the poor little thing—looking just like your baby looks now, was taken with convulsions and died in an hour. Oh, it's too late to put on a flannel band now. You must wait until the crisis has passed.

MRS. GRADLEY—Don't let Mrs. Terwiliger alarm you, rMs. Nagg. The child is perfectly healthy. I never saw a child vet with that pasty, blotchy complexion but what they lived through everything. Now, a pretty baby, one of those with rosy complexions, is always delicate.

MRS. BLENKINSOP—What big feet and hands it has! Well, that's a sign, my dear, that your baby will grow up strong and healthy. Even if a girl baby does look daintier with small hands and feet, I say you are fortunate that your child is lanky and ungainly.

MRS. DUSENBERRY—Take the child out of the light. You are making it squint! Oh, I beg your pardon, dear, I did not know the poor little thing squinted. I thought it was the light.

MRS. TERWILIGER—Oh, I know what you are going to say, dear, but really it may be years before the child loses its spotty appearance. I know you will worry yourself sick over it, dear, but the poor child can't help it.

MRS. HANKINSON—Mychildren were all so bright when they were the age o his one. But as I was telling my husband, Mrs. Nagg should feel thankful that her baby is not so very bright. Precocious children like mine grow up to be geniuses, and they are hard to restrain. Now take a dull child, no, not stupid, dear, I wouldn't say that! But take a dull child, and they will sit quiet and are really no care or trouble, because they are sluggish and never think.

MRS. WINTERBOTTOM—I wouldn't worry about it being pigeon-toed, dear. You can get those ankle shoes at any of the stores, and the child may outgrow it, and any way, it is a girl, and when it is big enough to wear long clothes it will not show.

MRS. NAGG—Now, really, I must take the little child upstairs. Do you know, it cannot bear old ladies? Now, if children or bright and handsome young people are around it it smiles all day. But if old people are around it makes it nervous, and it wakes up and screams. I think it remembers faces.

MRS. TERWILIGER—Well, you'd better take it away. A child with such a sickly look is harmed a great deal by getting excited, and as you have such few callers, Mrs. Nagg, the poor little thing is not used to company.

MRS. GRADLEY—Well, it is certainly a pretty baby, although its hands and feet are ridiculously large.

MRS. BLENKINSOP—And remember, if anything happens that child, I warned you.

MRS. DUSENBERRY—They never live long with that look.

ALL—So sweet of you, Mrs. Nagg, to show us the dear little thing!

Greatest Wire Slide Ever Accomplished.

M. Chapuis at a height of 2,000 feet.

M. Chapius in mid-air, the town and lake of Geneva in the distance.

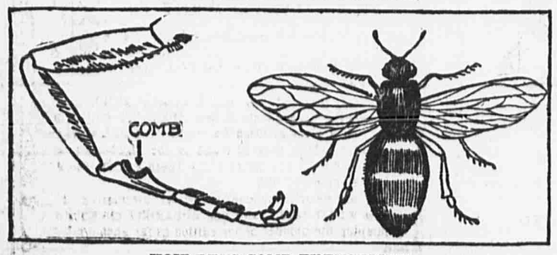
A FEAT which casts the ordinary slack wire performances into insignificance has been performed, not once, but twenty times, by M. Chapuis, athletic coach of the Berne University. A long and powerful wire is stretched from a point near the town of Geneva, Switzerland, the other end extending to the lofty peak of one of the many mountain summits which surround Lake Leman. The purpose the wire serves is to carry provisions from the town to the gast hauses, chalets, &c., thus saving the trouble of carting them over the rough lower slopes and steep roadways. M. Chapuis, bestriding this wire at the summit and maintaining a marvellous balance, slides safely and swiftly to the valley below. His speed during the descent is very great, often averaging 1,500 feet a minute. This means a descent at the rate of a mile in about three and one-half minutes.

The slightest dizziness, weakness or error in judgment would inevitably dash the daring athlete to death on the rocks hundreds of feet below. Once, and once only, this accident almost occurred. M. Chapui's balance was momentarily lost. His body whirled about, bringing him head downward over the terrible chasm. Seizing the wire with his free hand, he managed by a supreme effort to recover his equilibrium and completed the descent in safety. The death he had so narrowly escaped did not deter M. Chapuis from repeating his wonderful feat at the earliest opportunity.

The photographs here reproduced show the wonderful dizzy heights at which the athlete performs his feats. He is higher in the air at the beginning of his descent than many balloonists ever attain. One of the pictures shows him poised in the air 2,000 feet above terra firma.

Nature Provides Them with Combs.

FLYING SEMUR AND HIS COMB.



HOW BEES COMB THEMSELVES.

By means of a curved comb on each front leg the delicate feelers of the bee are kept scrupulously clean.

The flying lemur keeps his fur in order with his combilke lower front teeth.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES.

"Johnny," said the teacher, "can you name the three graces?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Johnny. "Breakfast, dinner and supper."

A lady visitor had occasion to consult her watch, which was very small, and little five-year-old Mabel, seeing it, exclaimed: "Oh, what a young watch you have."

One morning four-year-old Margie had pancakes and syrup for breakfast. After she had eaten the cakes there was some syrup left on her plate, and she said: "Mamma, please give me a spoon, my form leaks."

Tommy, aged six, had some difficulty with the children of a neighbor one day. That night after he was in bed his mother asked him if he had said his prayers.

"Yes, mamma," he replied.

"And did you pray for the heathen, too?" she asked.

"Y-es," he answered slowly, "all but those next door." —Chicago News.